ABHIMANYU

The Kauravas had made a fateful error. Lusting after their cousins' kingdom, they underestimated young Abhimanyu's determination and ability to defend it. Brilliantly distilled in this handsome and much-loved Pandava prince were his father Arjuna's courage, Lord Krishna's wisdom, and the patience, strength and gentle humility of his uncles. Even as he thwarted his enemies' ambitions, Abhimanyu earned their grudging admiration and a very special place in the saga of the Mahabharata.

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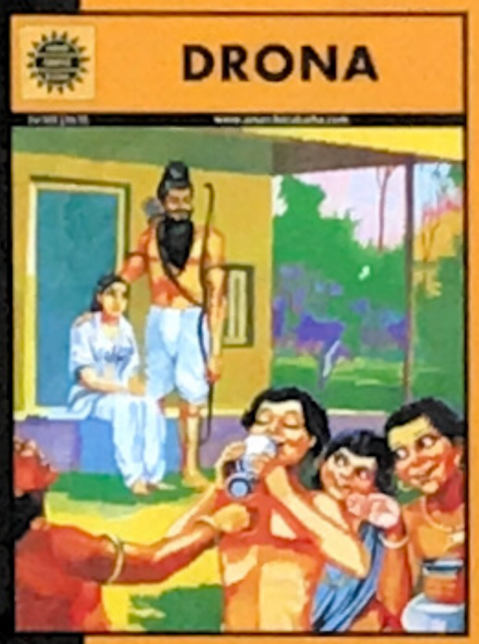

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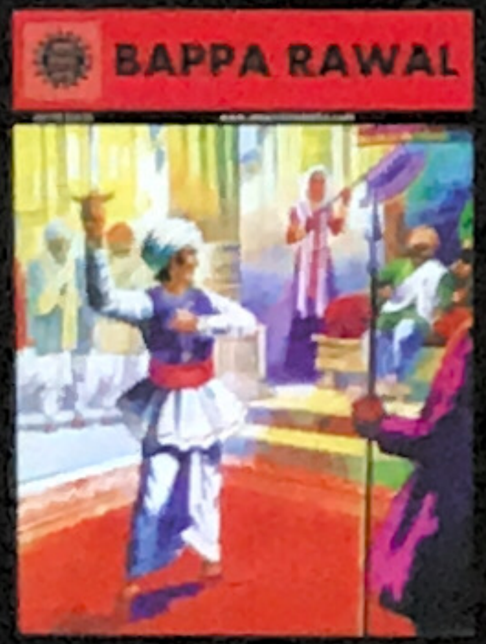

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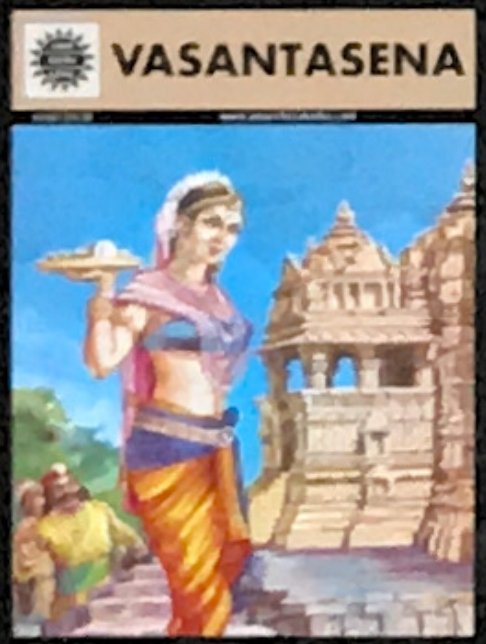

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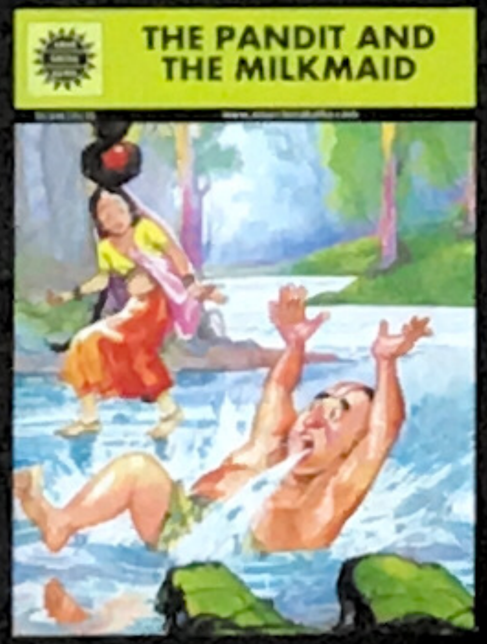

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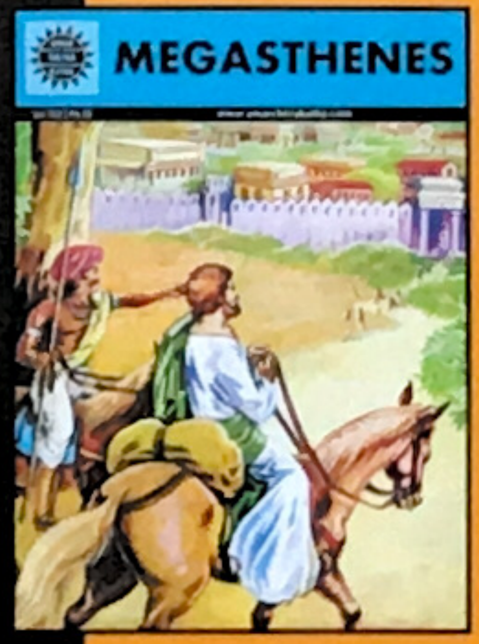

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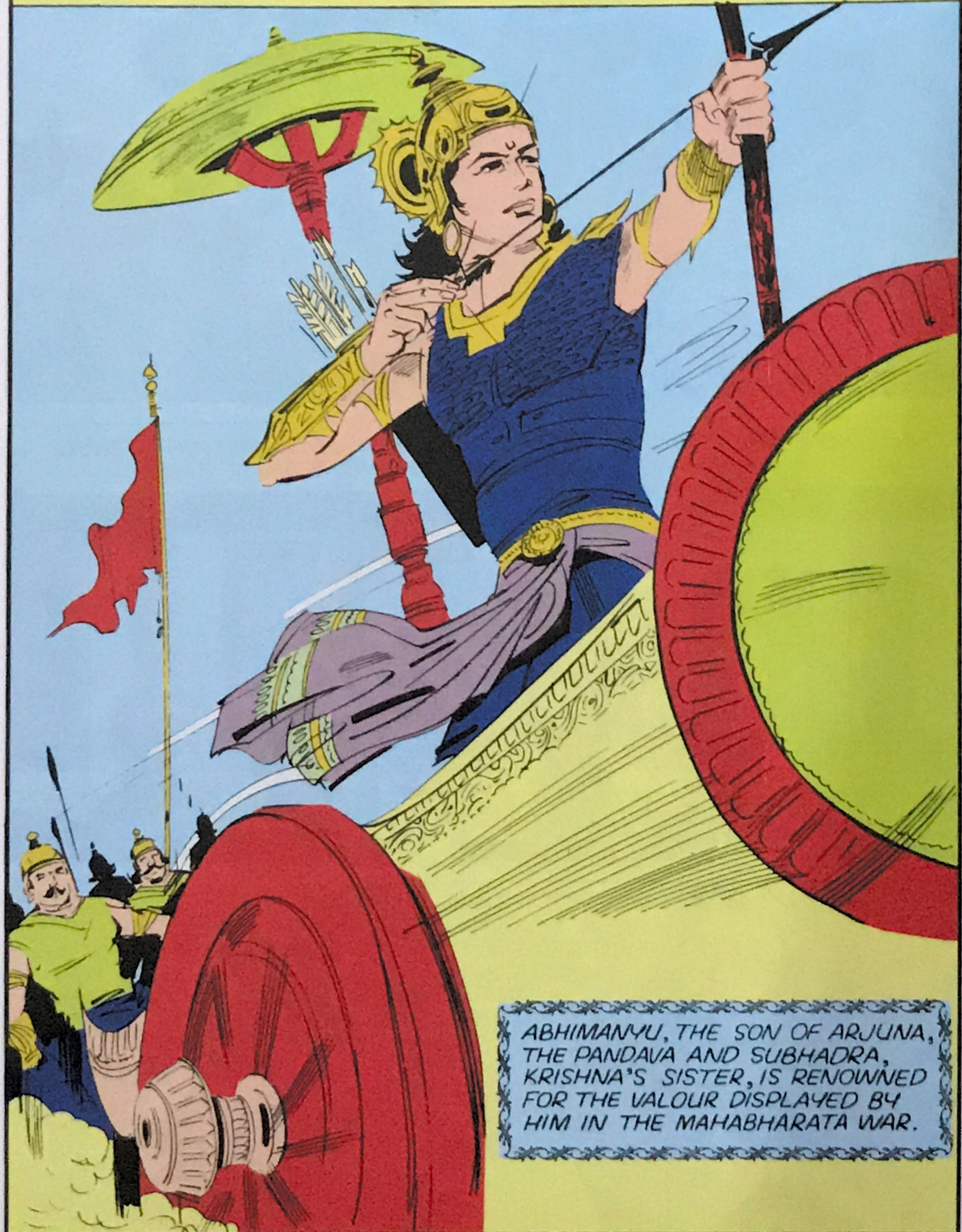
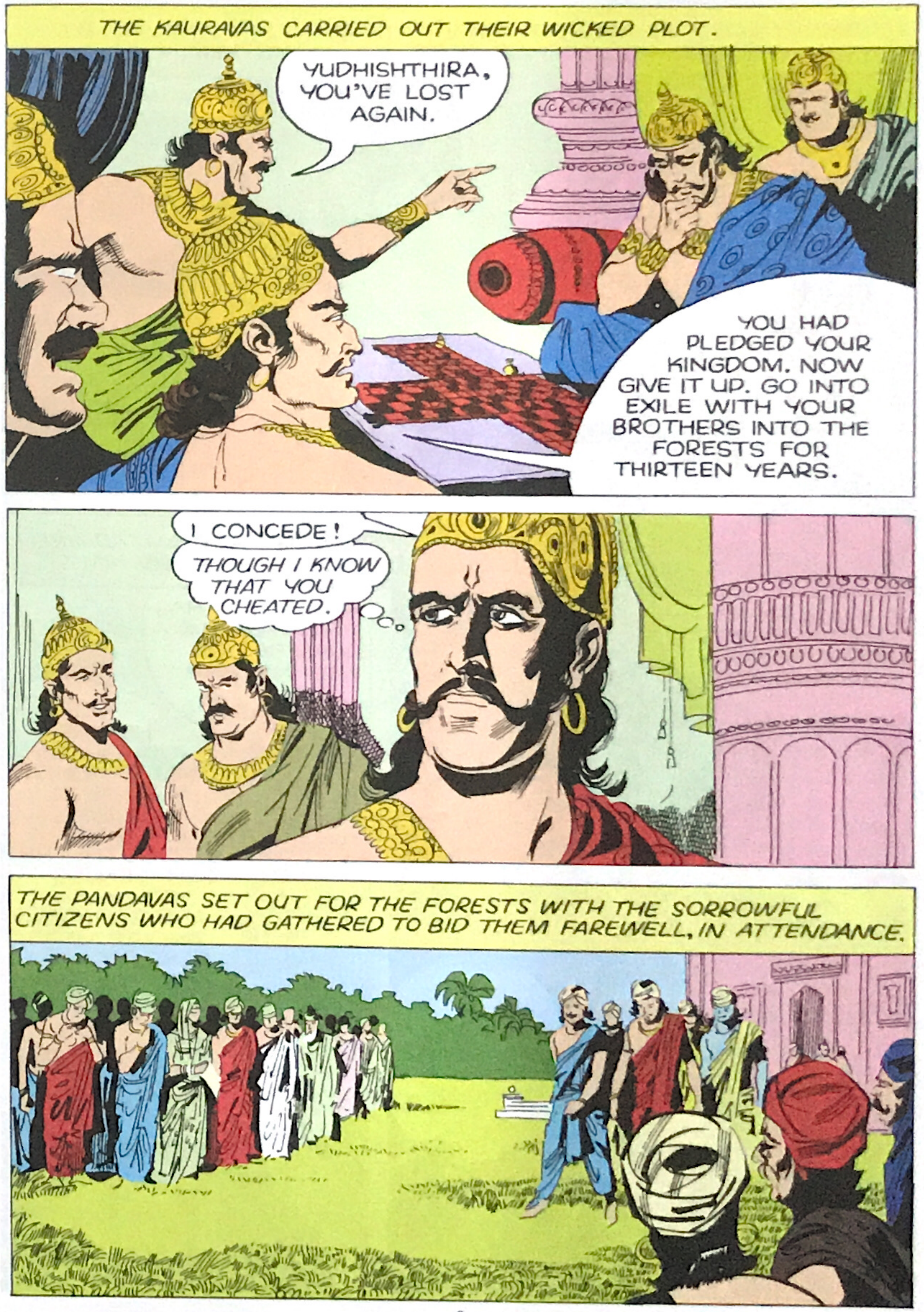
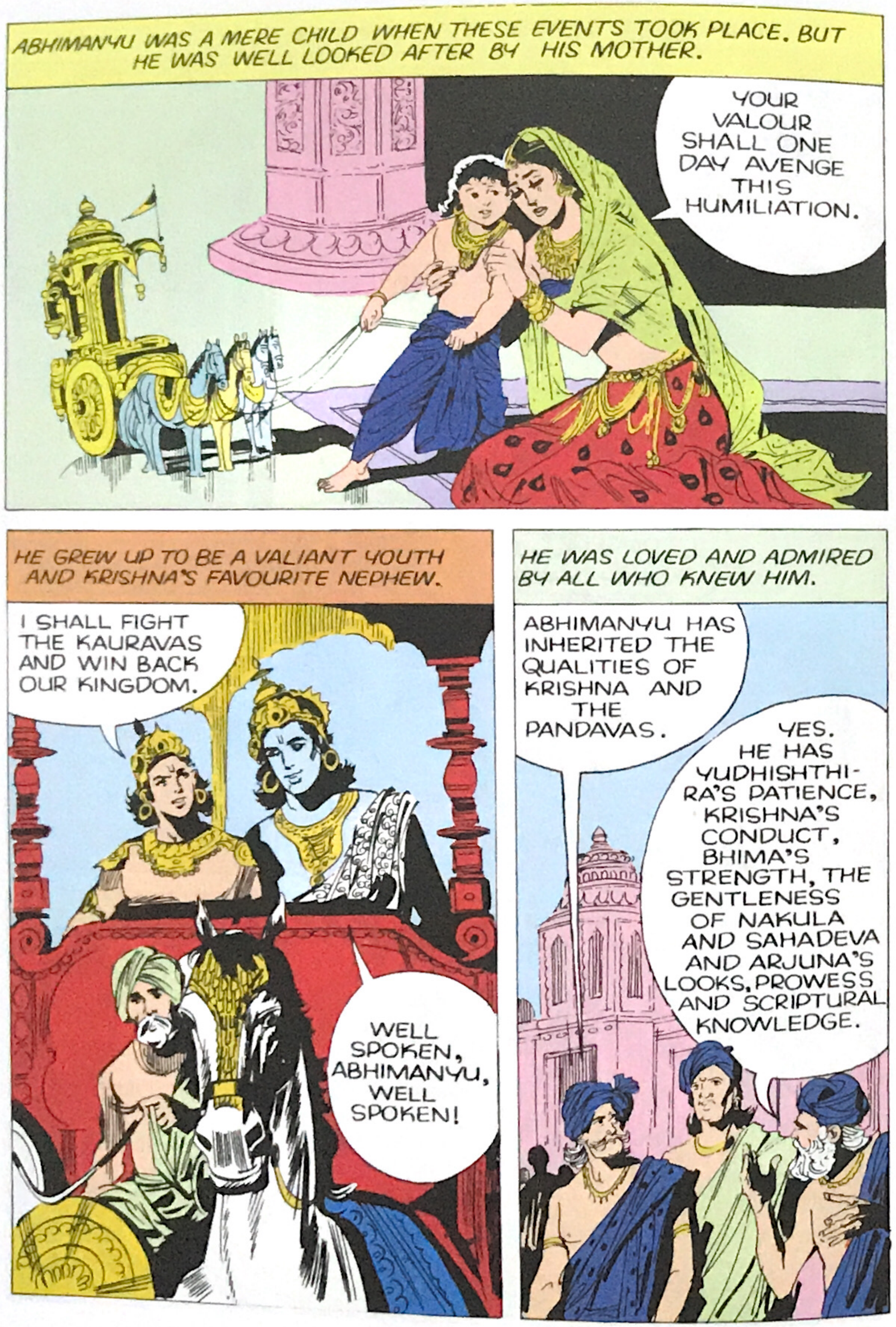
ABHIMANYU


ABHIMANYU, THE SON OF ARJUNA, THE PANDAVA AND SUBHADRA, KRISHNA'S SISTER, IS RENOWNED FOR THE VALOUR DISPLAYED BY HIM IN THE MAHABHARATA WAR.

HIS FATHER, ARJUNA COULD NOT HELP LOVING HIM MORE THAN HIS OTHER SONS.
ABHIMANYU SHALL GROW UP TO BE THE FOREMOST AMONG THE PANDAVAS AS WELL AS THE YADAVAS!
HUSH! ONE OUGHT NOT TO PRAISE ONE'S OWN CHILD THUS.
BUT ALAS! MISFORTUNE SOON BEFELL THE PANDAVAS WITH THEIR COUSINS, THE KAURAVAS, PLOTTING AGAINST THEM.
THE PANDAVAS ARE BECOMING TOO POWERFUL.
WE MUST TAKE THEIR KINGDOM AND GET RID OF THEM SOME-HOW!
I HAVE IT! YUDHISHTHIRA HAS A WEAK-NESS FOR GAMBLING. LET US INVITE HIM TO A GAME AND MAKE THE DICE OBEY US.


THE KAURAVAS CARRIED OUT THEIR WICKED PLOT.
YUDHISHTHIRA, YOU'VE LOST AGAIN.
YOU HAD PLEDGED YOUR KINGDOM. NOW GIVE IT UP. GO INTO EXILE WITH YOUR BROTHERS INTO THE FORESTS FOR THIRTEEN YEARS.
I CONCEDE!
THOUGH I KNOW THAT YOU CHEATED.
THE PANDAVAS SET OUT FOR THE FORESTS WITH THE SORROWFUL CITIZENS WHO HAD GATHERED TO BID THEM FAREWELL, IN ATTENDANCE.


ABHIMANYU WAS A MERE CHILD WHEN THESE EVENTS TOOK PLACE. BUT HE WAS WELL LOOKED AFTER BY HIS MOTHER.
YOUR VALOUR SHALL ONE DAY AVENGE THIS HUMILIATION.
HE GREW UP TO BE A VALIANT YOUTH AND KRISHNA'S FAVOURITE NEPHEW.
I SHALL FIGHT THE KAURAVAS AND WIN BACK OUR KINGDOM.
WELL SPOKEN, ABHIMANYU, WELL SPOKEN!
HE WAS LOVED AND ADMIRED BY ALL WHO KNEW HIM.
ABHIMANYU HAS INHERITED THE QUALITIES OF KRISHNA AND THE PANDAVAS.
YES. HE HAS YUDHISHTHIRA'S PATIENCE, KRISHNA'S CONDUCT, BHIMA'S STRENGTH, THE GENTLENESS OF NAKULA AND SAHADEVA AND ARJUNA'S LOOKS, PROWESS AND SCRIPTURAL KNOWLEDGE.

MEANWHILE THIRTEEN YEARS HAD PASSED. THE PANDAVAS WERE AT THE COURT OF KING VIRATA, IN DISGUISE AND IN THE LAST YEAR OF THEIR EXILE.
WHILE THERE, ARJUNA HELPED VIRATA'S SON UTTARA TO TRIUMPH OVER A KAURAVA ATTACK.
AFTER ARJUNA AND UTTARA RETURNED FROM THE BATTLE, THE PANDAVAS DISCLOSED THEIR IDENTITY TO VIRATA.
BHIMA.
I AM ARJUNA.
I AM YUDHISHTHIRA.
NAKULA.
SAHADEVA.
ARJUNA, I OFFER YOU MY DAUGHTER UTTARĀ.
O KING, I ACCEPT YOUR DAUGHTER AS MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.

WHY NOT AS YOUR WIFE ?
I CANNOT I WAS HER TEACHER ONCE IN MUSIC AND DANCE.
MY SON, THE VALIANT AND GODLIKE ABHIMANYU, IS KRISHNA'S FAVOURITE NEPHEW. HE SURPASSES ALL IN LOOKS AND IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF WEAPONS. HE IS FIT TO BE YOUR SON-IN-LAW AND UTTARA'S HUSBAND.
VIRATA WAS AGREEABLE.
WITH YOU AS THE FATHER OF MY SON-IN-LAW, I HAVE NOTHING ELSE TO ASK FOR.
YUDHISHTHIRA, TOO, GAVE HIS ASSENT AND WORD WAS SENT TO KRISHNA TO BRING SUBHADRA AND ABHIMANYU AND THEIR KINSMEN TO VIRATA'S KINGDOM.

THE WEDDING OF ABHIMANYU AND UTTARA WAS SOLEMNISED AMIDST GREAT FEASTING AND REJOICING. IT WAS ATTENDED BY A HOST OF FRIENDLY KINGS OF NEIGHBOURING KINGDOMS.
AFTER THE WEDDING THE PANDAVAS HELD A COUNCIL.
I WOULD LIKE TO WIN BACK OUR KINGDOM WITHOUT BLOODSHED.
LET ME GO TO HASTINAPURA AND SEE WHAT I CAN DO.
BUT KING DURYODHANA, THE KAURAVA, WAS OBSTINATE.
I REFUSE THEM EVEN AN INCH OF LAND. LET THEM FIGHT AND TAKE IT IF THEY CAN.
KRISHNA'S MISS ON FAILED.

AND IT WAS WAR BETWEEN THE PANDAVAS AND THE KAURAVAS - THE TERRIBLE WAR OF THE MAHABHARATA - IN WHICH PRACTICALLY ALL THE KINGS OF THOSE TIMES FOUGHT, AS ALLIES, ON ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER.
IT IS NOT YET NOON AND OUR ARMY IS BEING ROUTED BY THE KAURAVAS.
BHEESHMA, THE GRANDSIRE IS CREATING HAVOC WHEREVER HE GOES.
ABHIMANYU WHEN HE HEARD THIS CHARGED UPON BHEESHMA.
A MERE STRIPLING OF A BOY BUT WHAT A FINE WARRIOR! HE SEEMS TO BE EVERYWHERE.
THUS ABHIMANYU DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF ON THE VERY FIRST DAY OF THE BATTLE.

SOON OTHER WARRIORS CAME TO RELIEVE HIM AND BHEESHMA TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO THEM. BUT THE FIRST DAY WAS A BAD ONE FOR THE PANDAVAS. THAT NIGHT -
BHEESHMA HAS DECIMATED OUR ARMIES ON THIS VERY FIRST DAY OF BATTLE.
WHY DO YOU WORRY? YOU HAVE VALIANT BROTHERS, NEPHEWS AND ALLIES. MOREOVER SHIKHANDI IS DESTINED TO BE THE CAUSE OF BHEESHMA'S DEATH.
THUS KRISHNA CONSOLED AND ENCOURAGED THE PANDAVAS.
ON THE SECOND DAY, THE KAURAVAS INTOXICATED BY THEIR EARLY VICTORY, WERE OVER CONFIDENT AND CARELESS. TILL -
IT IS WISE TO END THE FIGHT FOR THE DAY AND RETIRE. WE HAVE SUFFERED HEAVY REVERSES AND OUR TROOPS ARE WEARY.
AND THE PANDAVAS WON THE DAY.
SO THE BATTLE WENT ON, SOMETIMES FAVOURING THE PANDAVAS, SOMETIMES THE KAURAVAS.

TILL AT LAST ON THE TENTH DAY BHEESHMA FELL, AT THE HANDS OF ARJUNA SHIELDED BY SHIKHANDI.
DRONA WAS MADE COMMANDER OF THE KAURAVA ARMIES.
WITH YOU AS OUR LEADER WE CAN EASILY DEFEAT YUDHISHTHIRA AND HIS MIGHTY ALLIES.
AND THE GREATEST BOON YOU COULD GIVE ME WOULD BE TO CAPTURE YUDHISHTHIRA ALIVE!
DRONA TRIED BUT FAILED. THAT EVENING THE KAURAVAS HELD A SPECIAL CONFERENCE.
WE CAN NEVER TAKE YUDHISHTHIRA AS LONG AS ARJUNA IS BY HIS SIDE.

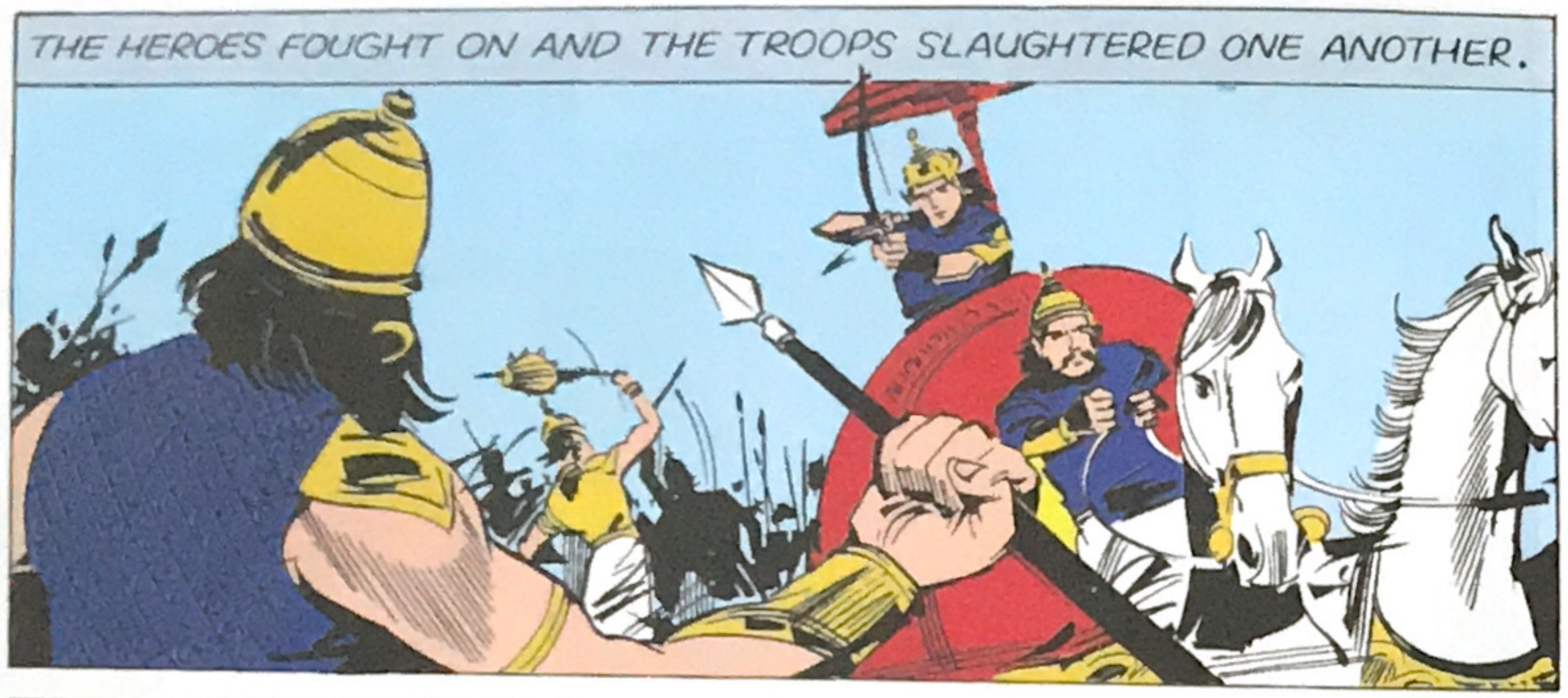
IF ARJUNA CAN BE DRAWN AWAY I CAN BREAK THE PANDAVA TROOP FORMATION AND CAPTURE YUDHISHTHIRA.
THAT CAN BE DONE. LEAVE IT TO US.
THE PLOY WAS SUCCESSFUL. ARJUNA WAS DRAWN AWAY, AND DRONA ATTACKED. THE ATTACK WAS SO FIERCE THAT THE PANDAVAS WITH ARJUNA AWAY, WERE LOSING GROUND.

AT LAST YUDHISHTHIRA APPROACHED ABHIMANYU, PLACING THE BURDEN ON HIS YOUNG SHOULDERS.
ONLY YOU, ARJUNA, KRISHNA AND PRADYUMNA KNOW HOW TO BREAK THROUGH DRONA'S CIRCULAR FORMATION OF TROOPS. NONE OF THEM IS HERE, BUT YOU.
SON, WILL YOU LEAD US ?
I WILL GLADLY TRY TO BREAK THROUGH THE FORMATION BUT......

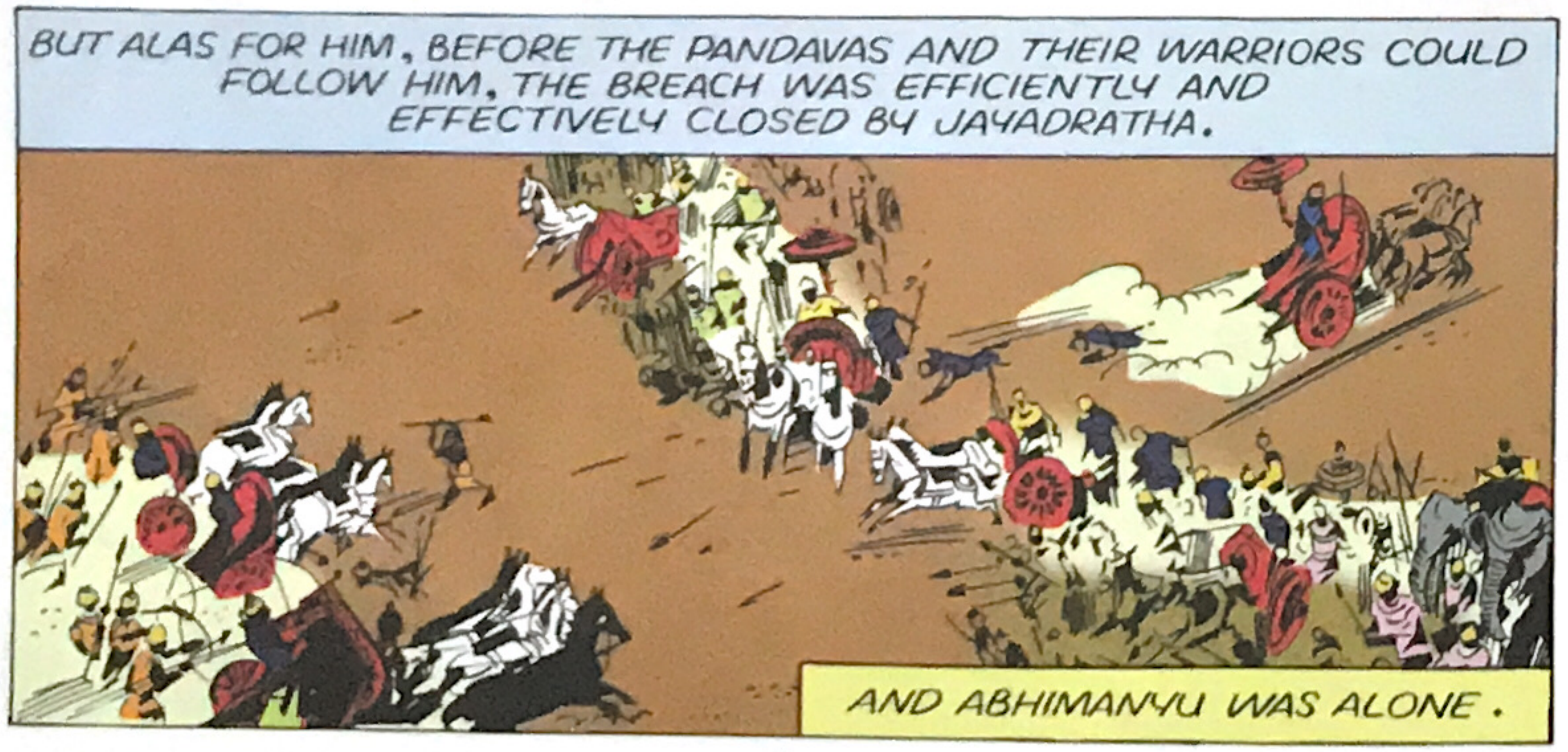
...I DO NOT KNOW HOW TO COME OUT OF IT, IF I AM OVERPOWERED AND IN DANGER.
BREAK THE FORMATION AND MAKE WAY FOR US TO ENTER. WE WILL FOLLOW CLOSE UPON YOUR HEELS AND PROTECT YOU.
I WILL BREAK THROUGH IT AND SLAUGHTER THE KAURAVAS. MY ACHIEVEMENT TODAY SHALL EMBELLISH THE FAIR NAME OF THE PANDAVAS AND THE YADAVAS.
MAY YOUR MIGHT INCREASE EVEN AS YOU SPEAK.

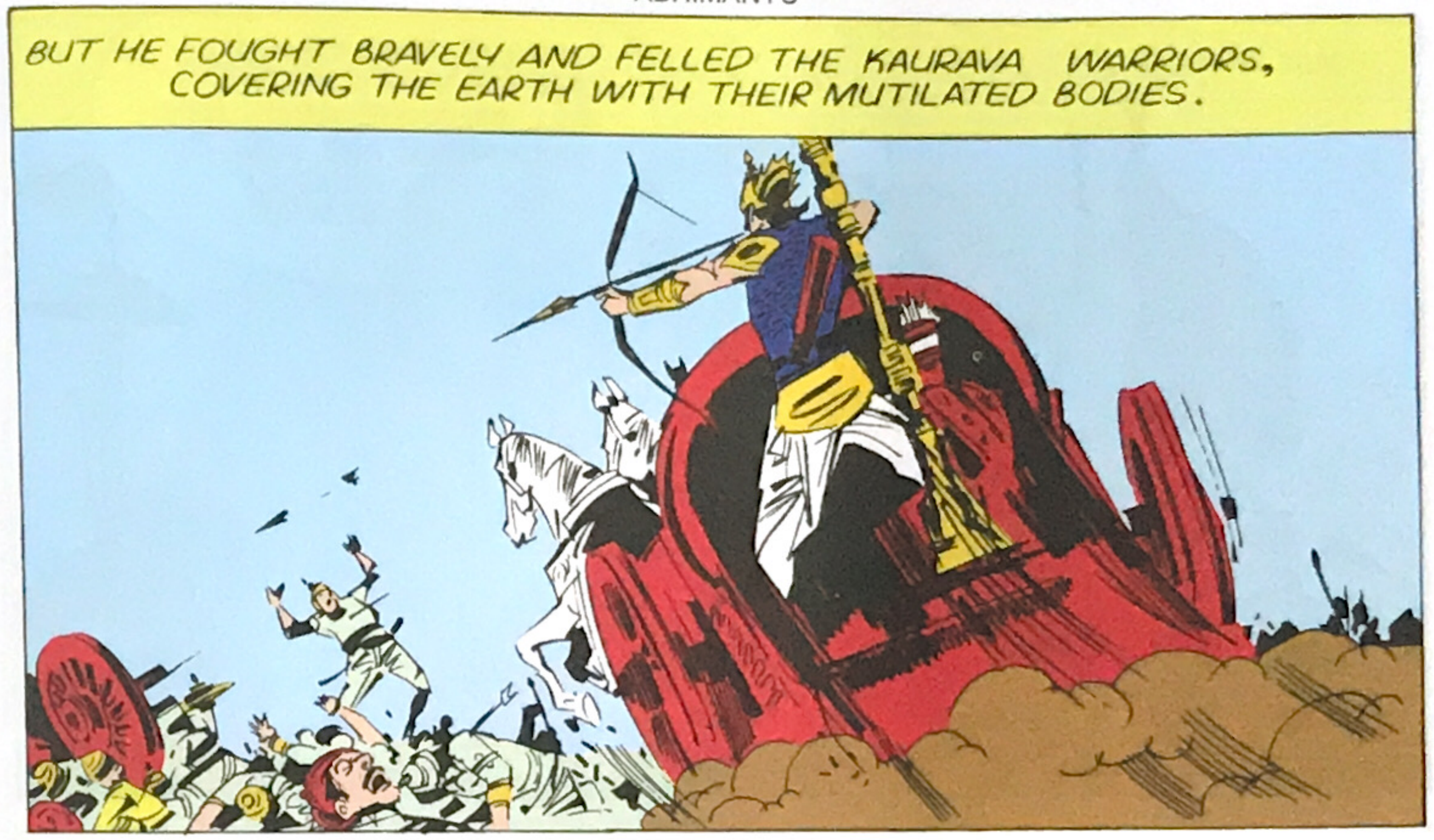
ABHIMANYU COMMANDED HIS CHARIOTEER.
PROCEED! PROCEED! URGE THE HORSES TOWARDS DRONA'S TROOPS.
THE PANDAVAS HAVE PLACED A HEAVY BURDEN ON YOU TODAY. THINK WELL BEFORE YOU PROCEED.
DRONA IS AN ADEPT IN THE ART OF WARFARE. YOU HAVE BEEN BROUGHT UP IN COMFORT AND ARE NOT USED TO THE STRAIN OF WAR.
I AM ARJUNA'S SON AND KRISHNA'S NEPHEW. DRIVE ON.

THEY REACHED DRONA'S ARRAY WITH THE PANDAVAS AND THEIR ALLIES FOLLOWING CLOSE BEHIND.
LOOK! HERE HE COMES! ABHIMANYU!
THEN LIKE A PROUD YOUNG LION FALLING UPON A HERD OF ELEPHANTS, ABHIMANYU RUSHED AT DRONA.

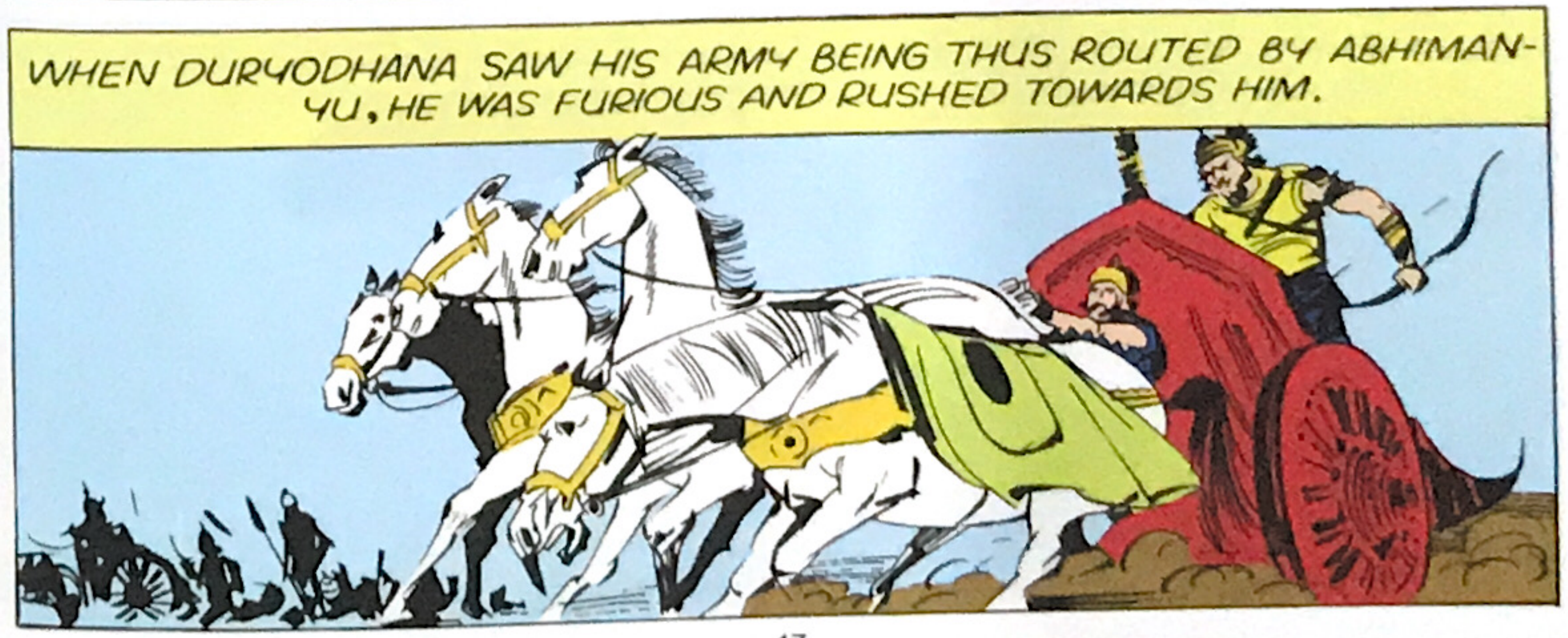

THE HEROES FOUGHT ON AND THE TROOPS SLAUGHTERED ONE ANOTHER.

WHILE THE TERRIFYING BATTLE RAGED, ABHIMANYU, BREAKING THE CIRCULAR ARRAY, ENTERED IT UNDER THE VERY NOSE OF DRONA.
HE IS INDEED THE GREATEST AMONG ARCHERS! HE IS CAPABLE OF DESTROYING AN ENTIRE ARMY IF HE CHOOSES!


BUT ALAS FOR HIM, BEFORE THE PANDAVAS AND THEIR WARRIORS COULD FOLLOW HIM, THE BREACH WAS EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY CLOSED BY JAYADRATHA.
AND ABHIMANYU WAS ALONE.


BUT HE FOUGHT BRAVELY AND FELLED THE KAURAVA WARRIORS, COVERING THE EARTH WITH THEIR MUTILATED BODIES.

THE KAURAVA TROOPS TERRIFIED BY THIS ONSLAUGHT, TRIED TO FLEE ON CHARIOTS AND ELEPHANTS FORSAKING THEIR WOUNDED KINSMEN AND FRIENDS.
WE WILL NEVER CONQUER THIS MIGHTY HERO.
LET US ESCAPE WHILE THERE IS STILL LIFE LEFT WITHIN US.


WHEN DURYODHANA SAW HIS ARMY BEING THUS ROUTED BY ABHIMANYU, HE WAS FURIOUS AND RUSHED TOWARDS HIM.

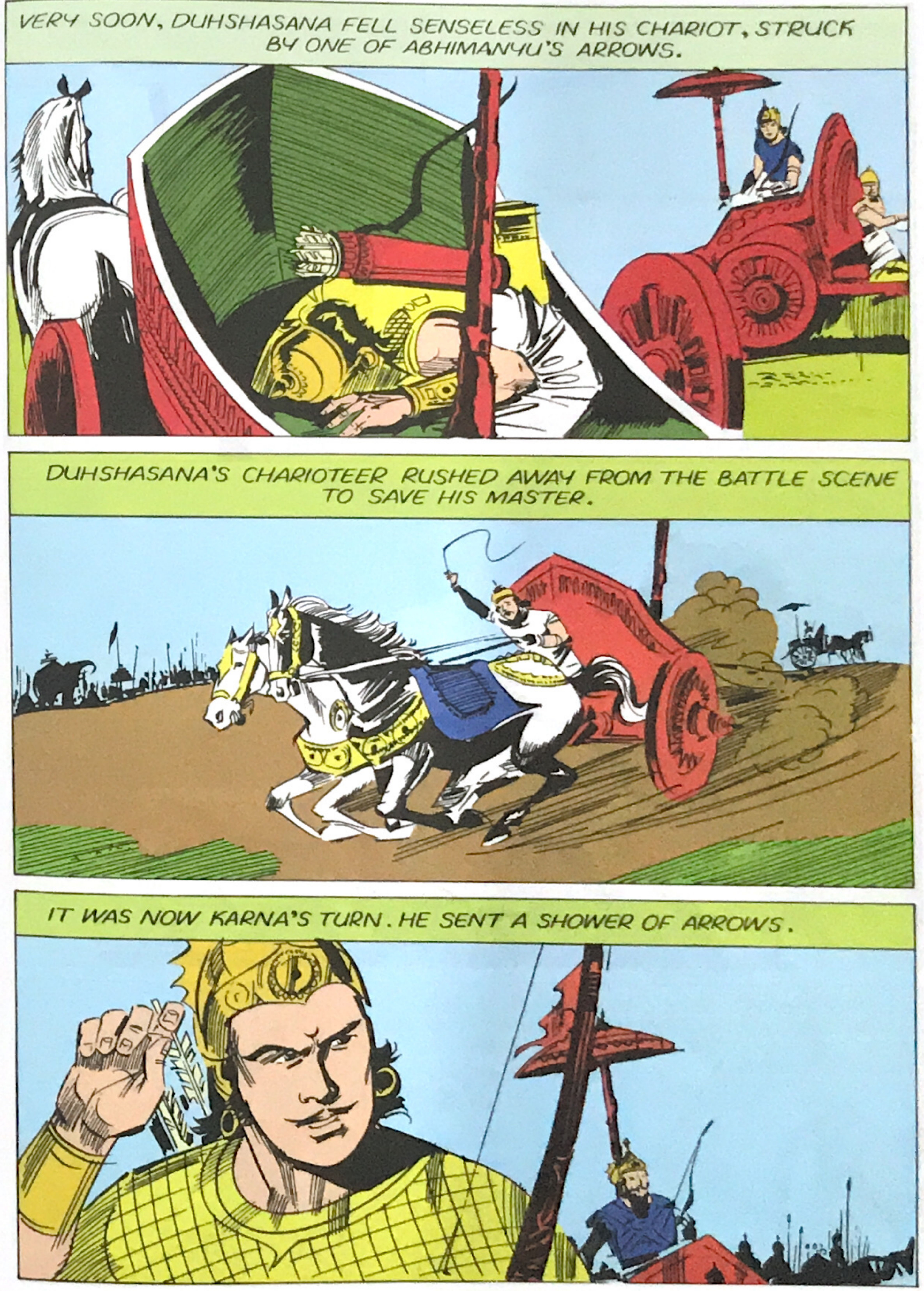
DRONA WAS ALARMED.
SAVE THE KING! ABHIMANYU KILLS ALL MEN HE AIMS AT. AND NOW HIS AIM IS ON THE KING OF THE KAURAVAS.
A GREAT NUMBER OF WARRIORS IMMEDIATELY WENT TO DURYODHANA'S RESCUE.
AND SUCCEEDED IN DRAWING HIM AWAY.
BUT ABHIMANYU WAS ENRAGED WHEN HE FOUND HIS PRIZE TARGET BEING SNATCHED AWAY.

HE VENTED HIS ANGER ON THE WARRIORS WHO HAD PROTECTED DURYODHANA.
FORGETTING THE CODE OF WAR CONDUCT, A NUMBER OF WARRIORS, LED BY DRONA, JOINTLY ATTACKED YOUNG ABHIMANYU.
NOW HE CAN'T ESCAPE DEATH AT OUR HANDS.
IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTROL THEIR ADVANCES. BUT A SHOWER OF ARROWS FROM ABHIMANYU'S BOW HELD THEM.

ONE OF THE WARRIORS, ASMAKA, RUSHED HIS CHARIOT AT GREAT SPEED TOWARDS ABHIMANYU.
ABHIMANYU'S ARROW KILLED HIM.
KARNA THEN MADE A DASH TOWARDS ABHIMANYU.
BUT HIS ARMOUR WAS PIERCED.

ABHIMANYU THEN WOUNDED SHALYA SO BADLY THAT THE GREAT WARRIOR COULD NOT EVEN MOVE FROM HIS SEAT.
SHALYA'S BROTHER RUSHED FORWARD.
I MUST AVENGE THE DEFEAT OF MY BROTHER.
ONE SINGLE ARROW FROM ABHIMANYU'S BOW...
...BROKE HIS CHARIOT TO PIECES.

SO GREAT WAS THE SKILL DISPLAYED BY ABHIMANYU THAT EVEN DRONA WHO LED THE ATTACK, ADMIRED HIM.
HE STANDS UNEQUALLED AS A BOWMAN. IF HE WISHES HE CAN WIPE OUT THIS WHOLE HOST, SINGLE-HANDED.
DURYODHANA, WHO OVERHEARD THIS REMARK, BECAME VERY ANGRY.
DUHSHASANA! LISTEN! HOW PARTIAL DRONACHARYA IS TOWARDS ARJUNA'S SON. WE MUST KILL THE BOY SOON.
I'LL KILL HIM. THIS VERY INSTANT.
THE CHARIOTS OF ABHIMANYU AND DUHSHASANA MADE WONDERFUL MOVEMENTS AGAINST EACH OTHER.


VERY SOON, DUHSHASANA FELL SENSELESS IN HIS CHARIOT, STRUCK BY ONE OF ABHIMANYU'S ARROWS.
DUHSHASANA'S CHARIOTEER RUSHED AWAY FROM THE BATTLE SCENE TO SAVE HIS MASTER.
IT WAS NOW KARNA'S TURN. HE SENT A SHOWER OF ARROWS.

ABHIMANYU INTERCEPTED THEM ALL.
AND SENT A FRESH SHOWER OF ARROWS IN THE DIRECTION OF KARNA.
KARNA HAD TO RETREAT.
DURYODHANA'S SON, LAKSHMANA, A BRAVE WARRIOR, RUSHED TOWARDS ABHIMANYU IN A BID TO SAVE THE HONOUR OF THE KAURAVA ARMY.

KARNA, DRONA AND MANY OTHER RETREATING WARRIORS, NOW CAME BACK TO SUPPORT LAKSHMANA IN HIS FIGHT.
BUT A SHARP ARROW FROM ABHIMANYU'S BOW CAME WHIZZING...
...AND PIERCED LAKSHMANA.
SEEING THE DEAD BODY OF HIS YOUNG SON, DURYODHANA WAS FURIOUS.
KILL! KILL THE WICKED ABHIMANYU!

AT THIS COMMAND OF DURYODHANA, DRONA, KARNA AND THE OTHER WARRIORS IN THE KAURAVA ARMY MOUNTED A FRESH ATTACK ON ABHIMANYU.
KARNA TURNED TO DRONA.
TELL US HOW TO KILL HIM BEFORE HE SLAYS US ALL.
YOU WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO PIERCE HIS ARMOUR.
AIM AT THE REINS OF HIS HORSES AND CUT THEM OFF. HE WILL BE DISABLED. THEN ATTACK FROM BEHIND.

KARNA CUT OFF THE REINS OF HIS HORSES.
FROM BEHIND, HE SHOT AN ARROW THAT BROKE ABHIMANYU'S BOW.
SOON ABHIMANYU'S HORSES LAY DEAD AND HIS CHARIOTEER WAS KILLED.
NOW HE JUMPED TO THE GROUND AND...

...WHIRLED HIS SWORD AND SHIELD. ALONE IN THE FIELD, HE HELD HIS GROUND AGAINST MANY WARRIORS.
SOON AN ARROW FROM DRONA BROKE HIS SWORD...
...AND AN ARROW FROM KARNA HIS SHIELD.

THUS ABHIMANYU WAS TOTALLY DISABLED. BUT UNDAUNTED, HE PICKED UP THE WHEEL OF HIS CHARIOT...
...AND BEGAN WHIRLING IT AGAINST HIS UNFAIR AND UNJUST ENEMIES. BUT HE WAS COMPLETELY ENCIRCLED.

ARROWS FROM MANY BOWS CAME WHIZZING FROM ALL DIRECTIONS.
AND SOON THE WHEEL LAY BROKEN TO PIECES.
ABHIMANYU THEN PICKED UP A MACE THAT WAS LYING ON THE FIELD.

DUHSHASANA'S SON CLOSED IN.
WHILE FIGHTING BOTH FELL TO THE GROUND.
BUT DUHSHASANA'S SON WAS THE FIRST TO GET UP.

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